

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, July 9, 2014

Hosted by: Howard County State's Attorney's Office
George Howard Building, C. Vernon Gray Room

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Ellen Alexander, Anne Bean, Barbara Bond, Dario Broccolino, Laurie Rajala for Tammy Brown, Jessica Dickerson, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, Dave Lewinski for Rhea Harris, 1st Sgt. Mark Meil for Sherriff Hoffman, Terry Baema for Molly Knipe, Eileen Meier, Margery Patten, Michelle Lee for Cindy Pease, Debra Tall, Deborah Unitus, Ginny Wolf

STAFF: Richard Hoffman, Anne Litecky and Monique Mitchell

GUESTS: Cynthia Callan, Shina' Castain, Michael Cohen, Victoria Coleman, Nicole Dechirico, Megan Dickerson, Danielle Duclaux, Tom Ehart, Chief Gary Gardner, Brian Furlong, Shirley Harbin, Sheri Hoffman, Kevin Hogan, Amy Holt-Somerville, Lisae Jordan, Wayne Kirwan, Kathy Masterson, JoAnn Middleton, Rosemary Miller, Jennifer Pollitt-Hill, Wayne Robey, Dina Ward,

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:17 a.m.

MINUTES:

- **Motion: Move to accept Minutes for May**
 - Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved
- **Motion: Move to accept Minutes for March**
 - Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved

COMPLIANCE:

Richard Hoffmann is the new State Victim's Rights Compliance Coordinator. He has been working with Anne Litecky on The Victim Rights Compliance Initiative and MDEC (Maryland Electronic Courts) system to ensure Chapter 205 (Victim Electronic Notification) is implemented into the system as it is developed and implemented statewide

- MDEC electronic filing and case management system will provide one electronic docket throughout the state in all courts (District, Circuit, Appellate and Juvenile)
- First implementations will begin in Anne Arundel County in October, 2014
- The Board is required to develop a certain protocol in consultation with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for crime victim and crime victim representatives electronic notifications, and revise victim brochures and the Crime Victim Notification and Demand for Rights Forms in addition to redesigning brochures and crime victim notification form as needed.
- Workgroups have met recently and have suggested to Court Commissioners that the crime victim notification should be included in the initial stages of development. Ensuring victim data is entered and notifications can begin immediately

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

❖ **Brian Furlong, Assistant State's Attorney, Felony Identity Theft and Economic Crimes**

- Howard County typically handles two types of identity theft; physical access to personal records and use of identity to be prosecuted
- Perpetrators use physical access to victim's personal records for economic gain, ex. Credit accounts, purchase cars, obtain utilities
- Victims are given resources to correct credit accounts established. Victim's advocates assist victims with completing and filling appropriate documents. Victims with disabilities are referred to the MCVRC for assistance.
- The majority of cases prosecutors handle are criminal identity theft. Prosecutors are able to file the appropriate motions to have victims cleared of any charges. 100% of the victims have been successful with having their criminal record cleared after identity theft
- In the last few years there has been an increase in internet identity theft cases due to internet thieves and scams. It is very challenging to prosecute criminals in other countries

❖ **Danielle Duclaux, Assistant State's Attorney, Vulnerable Adults**

- Vulnerable Adults Unit takes cases related to adults who are elderly or disabled. The majority of the cases are due to physical assault/neglect or financial exploitation
- Victims are unable to report crimes or be witnesses because of disabilities and illnesses. Most victims live in nursing homes, group homes and elderly care facilities. Co-workers of perpetrators aren't willing to talk for fear of retaliation
- It is very hard to prosecute individuals who have power of attorney for financial exploitation, because documented forms are very general.
- The biggest obstacle is helping victims believe they are actually victims and need assistance
- Howard County has developed a *Vulnerable Adult Committee* consisting of different agencies within the county, State's Attorney's Office, Police Department, Adult Protective Services, DSS, Dept of Aging, Grass Roots and citizens. This agency meets quarterly to brainstorm and come up with ideas to better assist vulnerable adult victims, whether criminal or not

❖ **Chief Gary Gardner, Howard County Police Department**

- Howard County Police Department has established several committee boards to bridge the gap between agencies and establish firm communications. Some of these boards include Multicultural Council, Vulnerable Adults, Mental Health, Human Trafficking, Child Advocacy and Domestic Violence
- Community Policing Department works with local non-profits and agencies through out the county
- In partnership with the Multicultural Council, mobile Hispanic officers are available to provide interpretations to victims, officers and detectives whenever there is a language barrier. Spanish is the only language offered at this time, the department is looking to at the possibility of adding Korean. This initiative was recently approved for funding of an additional officer
- The Mental Health component was established after the Columbia Mall incident. This team consists of the mobile crisis team, grass roots, a civilian mental health professional and an officer. The purpose is to preventatively refer individuals to services

❖ **Kathleen Masterson, Victim Services Coordinator**

- Victim Services provide crisis intervention advocacy, court assistance and transitional support and reaches out to a few thousand victims a year
- Victim Services is the liaison between the Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Sexual Assault, Burglary and other violent crime units
- Victim Services has increased access from the homelessness
- A victims database was created, which allows Victim Services to reach more victims with resources and services
- Victim Services is responsible for ensuring mandated brochures are mailed to victims and the webpage is updated with resources and services
- Currently the unit consists of 2 PT volunteers and the Victim Services Coordinator, who is the only one who has contact with victims

❖ **Wayne Robey, Clerk of the Court**

- The court flags files with a victim sticker to ensure victims are notified
- Court clerks ensure CVNF are entered into the system and placed in the file
- Civil restitution is entered by court clerk
- Victims with ex parte orders are given safe at home and VINE information
- A lot of court costs have been waived, judges may need to be trained on why court costs are important
- Trainings or updates on new legislation impacting court clerks is needed

❖ **Megan Dickerson, District Court Commissioner**

- The District Court is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- District Court processes pretrial release, criminal charges applications, peace and protective orders when the court is closed
- An advocate is needed to assist victims during the evening hours

- ❖ **Dina Ward, Victim Services Provider, Sheriff's Office**
 - Assist all victims with filing peace and protective orders, resources and the criminal process
 - They are currently developing a program with Howard County Public Schools to help children in Domestic Violence cases
- ❖ **Jack Kavanagh, Director of Detention Center**
 - Jail data is linked with VINE for victims to check and see who is at the detention center, pre-trial, charges, release dates and restitution information
 - The detention center is working closely with the State's Attorney's office to determine if inmates are contacting victims. If evidence is found that inmates have been contacting victims, phones calls are blocked immediately
 - Several programs have been created inside the detention center to reduce revictimization and reoffenses
- ❖ **Shina Castain, Assistant Director, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Community Supervision (Parole and Probation)**
 - This office maintains the MD Sex Offender registry, restitution collection from work release and victim contact information for address updates
 - DV & SA units have hired new agents specifically for victim notification
 - DOC completes human trafficking assessments to determine if victims are traffickers. Offenders are assigned to the SA unit and their victims are referred to services.
- ❖ **Jessica Dickerson, Department of Juvenile Services**
 - DJS is developing a peace order request for domestic violence and a human trafficking assessment tool. Juvenile females at Waxter's are provided with the tools needed to succeed. Referrals are made to Turnaround or Safe House of Hope. Males are sent to Hickey.
 - More services for human trafficking is needed
 - DJS recently completed a lethality assessment for teen dating violence and is currently working with teens to eliminate revictimization and recidivism
- ❖ **Jennifer Pollitt-Hill, Hope Works, Inc**
 - Hope Works and Howard County work together for sexual assault and domestic violence victims
 - Currently they are working together to bring awareness to human trafficking, develop housing, substance abuse and programming for victims
 - One of the biggest obstacles is helping victims to recognize they are victims
- ❖ **Joey Middleton, Howard County General Hospital Domestic Violence & SAFE program**
 - Safe program sees any person, any age with the purpose to collect forensic evidence and perform health assessments. They have 6 nurses who see adult, adolescent and pediatric victims. Only 46% of the victims are from Howard County, the majority come from Anne Arundel County
 - This program is funded by VOCA and VAWA.
 - Currently seeking 3 certified nurses by the Board of Nurses. It takes about a year to train a forensic nurse for adolescent and pediatric victims
 - 89 victims have been seen this year, 14% increase from previous years this time

- ❖ **Nicole DeChirico, Grass Roots Crisis Intervention**
 - A 2 clinician team that goes out with police, typically receiving 600 calls/year
 - Grass Roots handles death notifications, mental health counseling, crisis intervention training and short term grief counseling
- ❖ **Lt. Tom Ehart, Child Advocacy Center, Howard County Police, Family Crimes and Sex Assault/Child Advocacy Center (CAC)**
 - CAC works closely with Department of Social Services, State's Attorney's Office and Hope Works
 - The staff includes 13 detectives, 8 advocates, a physician and therapist
 - The therapist provides 24/7 crisis intervention and the physician completes initial examinations and follow-ups
 - 761 cases in 2013.
- ❖ **Amy Somerville, Assistant State's Attorney, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, State's Attorney's Office**
 - The unit handles about 40-50 cases per month
 - All clients are referred to Hope Works
 - All DV/SA cases are seen only on Wednesday mornings, typically about 15-20 cases are seen each week
 - The State's Attorney's office is considering a Mental Health Court to hear only cases where the defended suffers from mental health.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Guests and Board members were thanked for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.

**The next Board meeting will be held on
Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 10:00 am
At Anne Arundel County Police Headquarters**